

MONTANA JOINT APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
ON LONG RANGE PLANNING

JANUARY 26, 2011

To: Chairman Walter McNutt and Committee Members

From: Pat Byrne, Clinton Irrigation District

Subject: Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program

My name is Pat Byrne and I am currently President of the Clinton Irrigation District, which is located 20 Miles East of Missoula, and serves the agricultural areas around the community of Clinton Montana.

Our District has submitted an application for a DNRC Renewable Resource Grant and are currently ranked #21, by those involved in the RRGL Ranking Recommendations.

I had every intention to attend your hearing today, but unfortunately due to a serious illness recently discovered in my wife health, I will not be able to attend. In my absence, I have ask our Engineering Firm; WWC Engineering to attend and to answer any questions or provide further information on any aspects of our project that you or committee members may request. I do however want to thank you for this opportunity and for your consideration of our Project.

To briefly review this project, our District was created in 1919, and consists of approximately 6 to 7 miles of main canal and one major lateral ditch serving the Clinton School Grounds, several Subdivisions and approximately 150 acres of productive agricultural grounds. Initially we served 1012 in the District but because of the Interstate 90 and Service Roads construction we now provide service to 812 acres.

We refer to this project as the Schoolhouse Lateral and this section of our system has been a problem area for many years. This lateral is diverted form our Main Canal and delivers water through an open ditch for approximately 1.6 miles. This lateral ditch has a section of approximately 1400 feet that needs immediate attention and has been identified as a section to be converted from open ditch to a closed pipeline delivery system. This conversion is needed since the section had to be initially constructed on a steep, rocky terrain, in very poor soils and adjacent to East Mullan Road.

That portion which parallels the road has latent hazards for those using this major Service Road.

WWC Engineering has estimated that the seepage losses for the entire length of the Proposed Project Area due to its current condition are approximately 167 acre-feet per year or 54.4 million gallons. We have great difficulty providing sufficient stream flows to allow irrigators water without rationing or rotating days of use. Other factors which support this conversion project involves, sediment transported from the Interstate System drainage, sediments deposited by the County Road Department, bank erosion, and overgrowth of dense vegetation.

WWC Engineering and the District have looked at four different alternatives to resolve the problems of the Schoolhouse Lateral, and have determined that Alternative #2 is the preferred selection. It has the greatest cost/benefit and would meet all the project goals of the Clinton Irrigation District. Alternative #2 would replace a 1400- foot reach of our open lateral ditch with an 18" PIP pipe to provide adequate capacity and flow for our water users and would increase the efficiency of the system in this section by 90% , stabilize the banks, eliminate the seepage losses, increase production and remove any potential hazards to those using the service road.

Without the assistance RRGL Program the Clinton Irrigation District would not be able undertake this major and badly needed project. We are a very small district, which over the years has not been able to properly maintain the systems canals and structures because of our limited revenues. Like many areas of the State, our proximity to a larger city; issues of subdivisions, relocation of culverts and lateral ditches due to expansion of roads etc. have placed additional burdens and constraints on finances and operations.

To conclude, we are grateful to the State of Montana, the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and the Long Range Planning Subcommittee for your cooperation and consideration of our project.

Respectfully Yours,

Pat Byrne, President
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